



HERE COMES STOOPID*

*Stupid

JWR 4.28



Here Comes Stupid

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Look how cute I used to be. Well, now I'm just a moron.

I got a box of old pictures and school stuff from my parents a few months ago and thought that it might be interesting to scan each year's school picture and put them on the title page of a Rambling about myself, but that idea didn't really germinate. Then this thing happened at work and it made me think about innocence, in some respects, which reminded me of those old pictures. So here we are... and why I'm a moron...

My friend Jeff called me over the weekend* and asked me, "So, are you seeing anybody? Dating anyone?" I'm all, no. (To be fair, this was like a half hour into the conversation.) "Got a crush on anyone?" Yeah, of course. "I don't mean teenagers." I laughed. Oh... then, no.

How did he know? He's what we call "crafty."

The boss' daughter would work for a few hours a day, a couple days a week. She's very quiet, but seemed sweet enough. She was fifteen when she started working there – I remember she turned sixteen not long afterwards.

When she was probably seventeen I had a dream about her. It was nothing major – I just recall kissing her in the dream.† I told my work wife about it and she still brings it up every once in a while – which is fine; I do the same for the one dumb thing she's ever done.‡

At some point (probably even before I had the dream about her) I started thinking, ...*This girl is really cute.*

It's always been hard to talk to her just because she was so quiet and, I assume, shy. I am too, and doubly so around pretty girls, but I would try to talk to her and

* I wrote this the day the main events happened and the day after (with revisions for who-knows-how-long after that). Who knows when I'll send it out? Or if I ever will. It won't be the first slice of fried gold I haven't shared.

† I've always been under the impression that I couldn't be held responsible for what went on in my dreams – and anyone that figured otherwise was ill informed.

‡ That I've witnessed – and am allowed to talk about.

sometimes it would go fair and other times it would be extremely awkward, mostly because we didn't know each other well enough to hold much of a conversation.

Well, I don't know what happened, but one day a couple weeks ago we just started talking... and we were just bullshitting and taking each others' sarcastic remarks one step further, and it was only for about ten minutes and it was goofy, but it was nice, you know?

She's going off to college this week, so by the time I had the conversation with her, I knew she'd be gone soon. I started thinking: *I should say something to her before she goes. Something nice, something sweet.*

While I contemplated what I'd say to her, I was still seeing her at work a couple times a week, I realized I would look forward to the next time I'd see her,[§] that I'm going to miss her when she's gone. Boom! Item 1: I will miss you.

We actually continued having somewhat substantial conversations after the first one. I was enjoying that, too. Boom! Item 2: I've enjoyed actually talking to you finally. See, it would be cute and poke fun at our mutual shyness. The levity and wit are so great that I'm going to open with Item 2.

Did I say she was cute? Well, she is. And she has this amazing smile. Two weeks ago my office was being cleaned and I had to leave it for a bit, so I took a laptop I was working on over by her. I sat at her desk while she was doing some filing. While I'm waiting for some processes to run I have nothing else to do, so I'm just kind of looking at her... some may call it staring or *leering*, but – I don't know – I was just looking. At one point she came over to her desk, stood next to me and grabbed another stack of papers. She was close (we were talking this whole time, by the way) and I thought, *I could just lean over and give her a kiss on her cheek.* I didn't. *Smart move.* But I was looking. In my head I'm going, *She's... beautiful.* Boom! Item 3: You are beautiful.**

I have a niece who's sixteen. This girl is eighteen. That's a problem. Half your age plus seven: it's not just a good idea; it's the law (kinda).

[§] Yes, like a puppy

** I don't think the worst thing in the world would be to tell someone they're attractive. What's wrong with that?

I'm okay with being single until I meet someone I think I'd like to be with. To quote Neil McCauley: "I am alone – I am not lonely."

I live alone, I work alone (mostly), and I drink alone (occasionally). I don't think drinking alone is a big deal, okay? And it's not like I drink myself into a stupor. And it's not like I drink alone often. And I do not consider two or three beers with pizza "drinking." Four ounces of Southern Comfort on the rocks... yes, that's drinking.

I drink that alone sometimes.

I'm going to drink alone tonight, boy. Four ounces of SoCo sounds like *almost* enough.

I had my three things:

1. I've really enjoyed finally talking to you.
2. I'll miss you.
3. You are beautiful.

I imagined different ways to say these things, how to say them, varying inflections, blah blah blah. I thought about qualifying a lot of what I planned on telling her by prefacing it with something like "I don't know how you're going to look back on this conversation, or if you'll even remember it, but whatever the case, I hope you remember this next bit..." or after telling her that she's beautiful I'd say, "I don't mean to imply that you're not smart and sweet and kind, because you are. I wouldn't be telling you this if you weren't [and in reality I wouldn't have]. But I'm not talking about that. I mean, physically, you're stunning."

I think too much. I couldn't sleep. When I did finally fall asleep I'd dream of her... and not even good dreams which I would have been totally happy with. Another kissing dream would have been welcome.^{††} I'd wake up early with her in my head. Suddenly she wasn't the lovely girl I kinda knew, she was this snobby, unpleasable, unphasable girl in front of whom I could only make a fool of myself. I'd say what I had to say and she'd start texting with bad grammar about what a perv this guy who was talking to her was.

^{††} That's another thing: when I finish telling her the three points above... do I kiss her? Do I ask for permission to kiss her or just go for it? I'm a good kisser. Just ask your mother.

Did you ever see that *Family Guy* episode where Brian starts dating that fifty-year-old and she breaks her hip, so she sends him to the drug store and as he's leaving the drug store he sees these three young, attractive girls going into a bar across the street? Next thing you see is him at the bar with a few empty glasses in front of him and the girl beside him texting away. He slurs, "You're really pretty." She responds without looking up in a disinterested tone of voice: "Thanks."

It'd be like that.

But then they ended up having sex, so I'm not sure what the lesson there is.

Anyway, once I determined what I wanted to say to her, I had to come up with a plan for how I'd be able to get her alone to say it to her. It's an office. People are around. She's the boss' daughter. I wanted to say this to her in privacy. I decided that I would tell her I wanted to talk with her before she left and would she mind if I walked her out to her car when she was leaving. She'd say, "That's fine." Then I'd tell her to give me a call or stop by my office when she was ready to go.

Perfect. And... and... and it was a genius plan.**

Two days ago I decided would be the day. She was working and we talked briefly.

...And I aborted the mission. I was nervous at the prospect! Besides, how awkward would today have been if I had gone ahead on Tuesday?

I left for lunch on Tuesday and she was still working (later than usual). I got back and she was just driving out of the parking lot. We stopped and talked window to window for a couple minutes. My brain was screaming: *Tell her to park because you have something to say to her, stupid!*

"Okay, see you Thursday!" I said. *Moron! That was the perfect opportunity and you let it get away without so much as a whimper.*

That pretty much loaded up today. Time to nut up or shut up.

I went over to her and was like, "Last day, huh?" *Wow, what a dick.* Man, was I nervous. After a minute of talking about something (don't remember what) I told her

** I already had my plan plotted out when I talked to Jeff, so I imagine you understand how exposed I felt when he said what he said.

that thing about wanting to talk to her. She said something like “Huh?” or “What?” I don’t remember that either. I may have mumbled it (I do that sometimes) but I think it was more along the lines of her being like, “What do you mean you want to walk me out to my car?” So I repeated it and she was like, “Sure,” and I was like, okay – see you then. I told her to call me or come to my office. I could not get out of there fast enough, dude. But, the plan was working perfectly so far, as intended. *Geinus!*

Now that it’s over with, I know why I was so nervous: I had no idea how she would react. Every time I thought of it I’d come up with a different thing she could say that would leave me speechless or a reaction she’d give that would kill a part of me. I like knowing things in advance.

So, I had like two and a half hours to sit and think about being a stupid idiot. I just hope she spent that time thinking about what was going on and being nervous herself. Somehow I doubt it.

Then at a little after eleven she walked into my office and said, “I’m leaving now.” We first went looking for some cart thing she was borrowing to help move her stuff (going off to college, remember). So we found it and the walk out to her car took *forever*. I helped her get it in the back seat, she put on her sunglasses, and then she just looked at me. I was on.

I don’t remember exactly what I said, but I’ll try to recreate it. I was most likely not as articulate as I’m going to write it. I did decide to wing it.^{§§}

“I wanted to get you alone just to tell you a couple things. I’ve enjoyed working with you and I’ve really enjoyed talking to you the last couple weeks.” She smiled at that. See, it’s a cute comment even if she didn’t immediately think of the subtle nuances and if I didn’t say it quite right, but she smiled. Did I say she has a lovely smile? And we didn’t really work together, either, for the record. Then I paused and blanked for a second. “I kind of rehearsed some of this in my head [*ad nauseum*] but I’m just going for it.” Then I might have said something like, “This is weird,” maybe, and looked away for a couple seconds.

^{§§} Bad idea at weddings – okay with a girl (my rule).

I decided to throw out all the fluff. How long did I expect her to stand there listening to me yammer on about what basically amounts to a silly crush anyway? *And probably not even yammering with good diction.*

At this point she must have thought: *Oh, this guy's not going to do anything stupid, he's just going to say stupid things.*

I continued: "I wanted to let you know you're really beautiful." I thought it was important that I didn't say, "I *think* you're really beautiful," and I hope I didn't say that. It's probably not a big deal either way, but to me it became an important distinction. She smiled here, too. That was nice. I continued to continue: "You've probably heard that before, or maybe not yet, but I'm sure you will." I may have then said, "I wanted to tell you that before you left." I may not have said that last thing.

She thanked me. She said that she'd miss me and my brain screamed, *Fuck, I knew I forgot something!* I said I would miss her too and then she moved toward me to give me a hug. I hugged her back and called an internal audible to nix any prospect of kissing her. I know when to quit – well, sometimes I do.

When we parted I think I said something like, "That wasn't so bad," referring to my "speech." Not the hug, that was quite nice.*** *Like a... bag of sand?*

We talked for another minute. She said she'd come visit when she was back in town and that she'd hang out for a while at the office. I suggested we get lunch or something. (Going to lunch was another method I considered to have this conversation with her but thought it too bold to get her alone just to say embarrassing things to her.)

Then I said, "I'd say 'good luck at college,' but I don't think you'll need it." She said she thought she would. We continued with a few comments to each other but the conversation was basically over and I started walking away even though I told myself earlier that I should stand still while she got in her car and drove off.

So, why do I still feel weird and rather embarrassed?

*** There are people who don't think I'm a hugger. I don't hug everybody. I don't hug people who I know don't want to be hugged and I don't hug people who I don't like, but I'll hug family and friends and Europeans. I'll hug a hot teen girl any day. I'm also aware that I sometimes hug weirdly: I'll put my shoulder right into someone's jaw because of the height difference if I don't get low enough or if I lean in at the wrong time.

Well, I'm not ashamed of what I did. I knew if I didn't say something to her that I'd really regret it for a very long time. Literally, for years. I may regret how I said things and my nervousness, but it's done. I regret making myself crazy with all the potential things I could have said and all the potential ways she could have reacted.

I told my work wife^{†††} about what I did afterwards because I felt extremely wired (wired, not weird) and dumb. A little drunk. I told her, "I did something stupid."

She told me I shouldn't, that what I did was sweet and that the girl took it well, so why feel like that? Pretty good advice.

I later talked to this other lady at work – I didn't tell her any of this, by the way – and she mentioned this girl. She asked me if I thought the girl was cute. I said, yes, she's pretty cute (which is a bit of an understatement – I don't tell everyone the truth). Then she says if I thought she was cute, why didn't I do anything about it because the girl clearly had a thing for me.

What?!

See, this is what I'm talking about. I didn't even think about that possibility. I never saw the signs (if they even existed). I was taken aback. I said, "I wish we had this conversation before she left."

This new information brings up an interesting line of thought. Could I date this girl? Age is more than a number. Age is one issue, but it's the *only* issue because it affects everything.

She can't go to a bar yet – not that going to bars is near the top on my list of things I love doing, but it is something I do.

She's the boss' daughter, have I mentioned that one? I'm sure the age difference wouldn't be lost on him.

More than anything else, the idea, the concept of what I'll call our stations in life is so different. Even if we're mutually attracted, in three years she's going to change so much. Then three years after that, she'll change more. When I was 18 I was one way. When I was 21 I was another way. When I was 25 I was totally different again, and so

^{†††} Who is herself very beautiful, but it's hard to find a good time to tell someone who lives with her boyfriend and his three kids that she's beautiful and make it sound like a compliment but not a come on – which it could be, too.

on. I tried to explain this to my coworker, but she didn't see any of it as an obstacle. She's like: what difference does that make?

Maybe she's right and it doesn't make a difference. I mean, I guess we could grow together. Or maybe I'm right and she should be left to go off to college and do the retarded things we do in college. Let her change; maybe she'll become jaded and too smart for her own good. *That'll probably make her even hotter.*

Maybe I'm over thinking.

Oh, and don't think I didn't consider saying to her something to the effect of: "If we were a little closer in age..."

Again, good decision, John.

* * *

Next day.

Man, I feel so much better today. I actually got almost a full night's sleep and if I dreamt of her, I don't remember it. I also feel much less foolish about the whole thing (I imagine that could change if she ever walks into my office).

If I had my way I would have said this (and I would have been wearing my suit – I look amazing in my suit):

I wanted to get you alone for a minute so I could tell you how much I've enjoyed getting to know you and *finally* getting to talk with you over the past couple weeks. I wish we had started talking sooner, but in some ways this is better. I'll definitely miss you but I'm excited for you, too. I know you'll enjoy college and you'll do well there. I also couldn't let you go away without telling you that you're beautiful. [I like how I think I put this next part in reality] You've probably heard that before, or maybe not yet, but I'm sure you will.

That one says it all (or almost all), but it ignores the possibility of her responding to something I said before I was finished. That's something I really didn't consider too much in my rehearsals. Also, the ending, as nice as it is, is kind of weak.

All in all, I didn't do too badly in reality.

I still catch myself thinking about what to say to her, and I have to remind myself it is done, it's in the past. Move on.

I notice in my text above I use "just" and "stupid" frequently. Obviously I felt stupid for a lot of reasons, and I think I explained that thoroughly enough. As far as "just" goes... well, that's my subconscious trying to make this all seem like it's not a big deal. It is and it isn't.

It is a little.

John

PS: Wow, that's long. I can sum this whole thing up in one paragraph:

There was this 18-year-old girl who worked in my building until she went off to college this week. I'm going to miss her. I told her she was beautiful before she left. She hugged me, which was very sweet. If we weren't so far off in age, I would have liked to date her. It's possible she was into me. Well, I'm not holding my breath. It's Miller Time.

PPS: Is he done yet? Nine pages of pathetic drivel. What did he expect? Hey, did you think she'd admit her undying love for you, not go to school, move in with you and wash your dishes? Yes... that does sound nice, but it'll never happen.

Wash your own dishes.